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CALIFORNIA BIRDS

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Editors: Virginia P. Coughran, Alan M. Craig, Jean T. Craig, Pierre Devillers, Clifford R. Lyons, Guy McCaskie

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Membership dues and changes of address should be sent to Clifford R. Lyons, Treasurer, 6424 Mt. Adelbert Dr., San Diego, California 92111. Classes of membership (all include subscription to California Birds): Patron, $1000; Life, $150; Supporting, $20 annually; Contributing, $10 annually; Regular, $5 annually.

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EDITORIAL

This, the first issue of California Birds, marks the inauguration of a publication which hopefully will earn a place among the major ornithological journals. It will have, however, a rather different approach than most of those journals in that it will be devoted almost exclusively to field ornithology.

Specifically, California Birds will focus attention on the following areas:

(1) Distribution, expansions and contractions of range, seasonal status, and timing of migration.
(2) Behavior.
(3) Ecology.
(4) Population studies and the methods for making such studies.
(5) Techniques of field identification for species that are difficult to distinguish in the field.
(6) Conservation problems (studies supporting preservation of needed habitat and critical areas, studies of endangered species, and studies of the effects of biocides and pollution).

Although the emphasis (particularly in the first and last of the above subject areas) will be on articles relating to California, the intent is that each issue will contain sufficient material of general interest to be of value to ornithologists everywhere. Therefore any article based upon or pertaining to field studies of birds will be considered for publication if it is of general interest or if it deals with birds in the state of California, adjacent areas, or the northeastern Pacific Ocean. Papers submitted for publication will be reviewed by an Editorial Committee,

to assure that all papers published maintain a high standard of quality and contain material within the scope of the journal.

One of the functions of California Birds will be the publication of properly authenticated field observations of birds found in California which are significantly outside their normal range. The time has long since passed (if it ever existed) when it was feasible to validate all noteworthy observations with a collected specimen. Yet, for field observations to be of value there must be some system whereby serious students can ascertain which of the multitudinous observations are acceptable beyond any reasonable doubt. Photographs serve to document many observations and are certainly of immense value whenever obtainable. In some cases specimens will still be required; however, the only possible documentation for the majority of field observations is a detailed description taken at the time of the observation. A Rare Bird Committee will be established to review significant observations documented by photographs and/or detailed description. Only those reports accepted unanimously by the Committee will be published in California Birds. The methods of operation of the Rare Bird Committee described below are very similar to those employed by Rare Bird Committees in Great Britain and in Belgium.

California Birds is published by California Field Ornithologists, a new society whose objectives are: (1) to provide a medium for publication of the results of countless hours of field study by California's large and ever-growing army of amateur and professional observers, and (2) to upgrade the standards of these observers through the communication afforded by this publication. Membership in California Field Ornithologists is open to everyone. All classes of members are entitled to receive California Birds. *–AMC.*

THE FUNCTIONING OF THE RARE BIRD COMMITTEE

All reports on the occurrences of unusual birds submitted for publication in California Birds will be sent to the Secretary of the Rare Bird Committee. The Secretary will send the entire report to the first member of the Committee. The first member of the Committee checks the report and draws his own conclusions about the validity of the

report; he then sends his decision along with comments back to the Secretary, and sends the report on to the second member of the Committee. The process is repeated until the last member of the Committee. receives the report, and he sends it back to the Secretary along with his own comments. If all members of the Committee agree the bird was correctly identified, it is accepted. If a majority of the members feel the bird was incorrectly identified, the record is rejected. In all other cases the report along with the comments received from the first round is again circulated to the members of the Committee for a second judgement. If it is neither accepted nor rejected on the second round it is saved for discussion at the annual meeting.

The members of the Committee are not allowed to discuss any record under consideration on the first round with other members of the Committee although they can discuss it with anyone else outside of the Committee; this allows each member of the Committee to review the record without being influenced by other Committee members on the first round. On the second round the Committee members are allowed to read the comments of their fellow Committee members, and they are allowed to draw a new conclusion if they feel they were wrong on the first round.

There will be no set rules that the Committee members will have to follow in judging the validity of individual records. However, the members will have to state the reasons for their decisions in their comments sent to the Secretary. It is hoped that each member of the Committee will view each record with an open mind and consider all possibilities presented by the available evidence.

The Committee should be made up of a non-voting Secretary and between five and ten voting members. Hopefully the voting members should be representatives of the various areas of the state. A member of the Rare Bird Committee must be fully aware of the many problems that arise in field identification, and must have a good understanding of status of the birds of California. *–GMcC.*

A CHECKLIST OF THE BIRDS OF CALIFORNIA

Guy McCaskie, Pierre Devillers, Alan M. Craig, Clifford R. Lyons, Virginia P. Coughran, Jean T. Craig

INTRODUCTION

Twenty-five years have elapsed since Grinnell and Miller published *The Distribution of the Birds of California*, the only comprehensive list of the birds of the state. In that time additional species have been recorded in the state and much has been learned about the status and distribution of others. The need for an up-to-date reference has prompted the following list, which includes all the species recorded in California through 1969. A specimen, a photograph, or a sonagram is deposited in a museum to substantiate the occurrence of all but four species, which have been included on the basis of valid sight records. The species on the list have been carefully reviewed, and it is believed that all reached the state under their own power; however, the possibility that records of a few species pertain to escapees cannot be entirely eliminated. Although it is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss the status and distribution of each species, the following broad categories are indicated:

- N Nested successfully at least once in the state.
- X Irregular, casual, or accidental in the state.
- E Extinct in the state.
- S Sight record only for the state.
- I Introduced in the state, or reached it as a result of introduction elsewhere.

NOMENCLATURE

The nomenclature and classification used in this list essentially follow the A.O.U. Check-list of North American Birds (1957). This Checklist is now somewhat out of date, for no supplements dealing with taxonomic revisions suggested since its publication have yet appeared. In several instances we have deviated from the Check-list at the species level in order to conform with recent evidence. These changes are based upon published studies and upon the application of recently proposed species criteria. Whenever our treatment differs from that of the A.O.U., we discuss the reasons leading to the change. Most of these changes are clear-cut cases of sympatry without

hybridization, or the result of applying the criterion suggested by Short (1969). In brief, Short's criterion is to consider populations which form "hybrid zones" as conspecific, and to consider populations which form "zones of overlap and hybridization" as specifically distinct. "Hybrid zones" are defined as areas where only hybrids occur, and "zones of overlap and hybridization" as areas occupied by numerous hybrids as well as pure birds of both parental forms.

The generic arrangement and sequence of species utilized in the A.O.U. Check-list have been followed without alteration; however, this should not be interpreted as indicating a preference for that sequence, or for the generic divisions within it. Certain changes, particularly toward broader genera, are no doubt desirable, but, for a number of reasons, we have refrained from following any of the changes that have been suggested. The treatment given to the generic classification of various families so far is extremely unequal, and many questions are far from being settled. The genus, unlike the species, is an artificial division, and decisions pertaining to genera are always somewhat arbitrary. A correct delineation of genera is not considered essential for most field work, nor for a checklist intended primarily for field observers; nonetheless, we do not intend to underrate the importance of understanding generic relationships for certain aspects of field work. Since no arrangement and sequence of species has met with international agreement, it seems best to follow a system familiar to everyone in this country.

CHANGES IN NOMENCLATURE

Pacific Loon (*Gavia pacifica*). The A.O.U. treats the Pacific Loon as a race of a Holarctic species, the Arctic Loon (*G. arctica*); however, they include a footnote stating that *G. a. viridigularis* and *G. a. pacifica* have been found by Bailey breeding in the same area at Cape Prince of Wales in Alaska, and could possibly be distinct species. According to Vaurie (1965), Portenko found the two forms breeding at the same locality in Anadyrland, Siberia without signs of interbreeding. Vaurie discusses the morphological differences between Arctic Loon and Pacific Loon, and follows Bailey and Portenko in treating them as distinct species.

Wood Stork (*Mycteria americana*). This common name, which indicates the correct family relationship of the species, is used instead of the misleading "Wood Ibis".

Brant *(Branta bernicla).* The Black Brant (*B. nigricans*) of the A.O.U. is included in the Brant as proposed by Delacour and Mayr (1945), and as widely accepted by all modern reviewers of the Anatidae (Delacour, 1954-64 and Johnsgard, 1965). *B. b. nigricans* is the common form occurring in California, *B. b. hrota* being found occasionally.

Snow Goose (*Chen caerulescens*). We follow Delacour and Mayr (1945), Cooch (1961), and Cooke and Cooch (1968) in treating the Blue Goose (*C. caerulescens*) and the Snow Goose (*C. hyperborea*) of the A.O.U. as color phases of a single species. The white phase is the normal form in California, but a few individuals of the blue and intermediate phases occur.

Green-winged Teal (*Anas crecca*). The North American Green-winged Teal (*A. carolinensis*) of the A.O.U. is treated as a race of the Eurasian Common Teal (*A. crecca*) as proposed by Delacour and Mayr (1945). McKinney (1965) found no differences in behavior between the two forms. *A. c. carolinensis* is the race occurring in California, but a few drakes of the Eurasian race *A. c. crecca* have been detected.

White-winged Scoter (*Melanitta fusca*). The American White-winged Scoter (*M. deglandi*) is considered conspecific with the Palearctic Velvet Scoter (*M. fusca*) after Delacour and Mayr (1945); however, as mentioned by Vaurie (1959), the matter is not completely settled.

Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*). We have followed Brown and Amadon (1968) in treating the Harlan's Hawk (*B. harlani*) of the A.O.U. as a color phase of the Red-tailed Hawk. A few individuals showing the characters of the "Harlan's Hawk" have been found in California, along with the common Red-tailed Hawk.

Chukar (*Alectoris chukar*). Three sibling species are involved in what was formerly known as *Alectoris graeca*: the Rock Partridge *(A. graeca)* of southern Europe, the Chukar Partridge (*A. chukar*) of Asia, and the Przewalski's Rock Partridge (*A. magna*) of northern China (Watson, 1962; Vaurie, 1965). The birds introduced into North America belong to *A. chukar.*

Upland Sandpiper (*Bartramia longicauda*). This common name is preferable to the usual "Upland Plover" since the species is not a plover.

Black-necked Stilt *(Himantopus himantopus).* We have followed Vaurie (1965) and others in treating the Black-necked Stilt *(H. mexicanus)* as a race of the cosmopolitan Black-winged Stilt *(H. himantopus).*

Thayer's Gull *(Larus thayeri)*. Recent work by Macpherson (1961) and Smith (1966) has shown that the Thayer's Gull, formerly considered a race of the Herring Gull *(L. argentatus)*, is specifically distinct from that form. Both species occur sympatrically, with little if any hybridization, in the Canadian Archipelago.

Common Flicker *(Colaptes auratus)*. In lumping the Yellow-shafted Flicker *(C. auratus)*, the Red-shafted Flicker *(C. cafer)*, and the Gilded Flicker *(C. chrysoides)* of the A.O.U., we follow the recommendations of Phillips (1961), Short (1965 and 1969), and others. The "Red-shafted Flicker" occurs throughout most of California, the "Gilded Flicker" is resident in a very limited area, and the "Yellow-shafted Flicker" regularly reaches the state in small numbers.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker *(Sphyrapicus varius)*, Red-naped Sapsucker *(S. nuchalis)*, and Red-breasted Sapsucker *(S. ruber)*. Short (1969) classifies the regions of contact between those sapsuckers studied by Howell (1952) as "zones of overlap and hybridization", and he concludes that the races *S. v. varius, S. v. nuchalis,* and *S. v. ruber* of the A.O.U. should be treated as three separate species. This treatment is followed by Mayr and Short (MS).

Willow Flycatcher *(Empidonax traillii)*. Stein (1958 and 1963) has shown that the popularly called "fitz-bew" and "fee-be-o" types of the Traill's Flycatcher *(E. traillii)* of the A.O.U. represent two species, sympatric without interbreeding in certain regions. There appears to be some confusion surrounding the names on the type specimens, and Short (pers. comm.) advised us the "fitz-bew" type should be *E. traillii* and the "fee-be-o" type should be *E. alnorum.* We follow Stein in using Willow Flycatcher as the common name of the "fitz-bew" type.

Pine Nuthatch *(Sitta pusilla)*. The study of the allopatric Pygmy Nuthatch *(S. pygmaea)* and Brown-headed Nuthatch *(S. pusilla)* of the A.O.U. by Norris (1958) shows how similar the two birds are. Though Norris' reccommendation was to keep them apart, many have felt that the case for uniting them was strengthened, and this is the course followed by Mayr and Short (MS). Sutton (1949) has suggested the common name, Pine Nuthatch. Only the western "Pygmy Nuthatch" occurs in California.

Yellow-rumped Warbler *(Dendroica coronata)*. The relationship between the Myrtle Warbler *(D. coronata)* and Audubon Warbler *(D. auduboni)* of the A.O.U. has been studied by Hubbard (1969), who recommended an intermediate treatment of the two forms as semi-species. The contact area is clearly a "hybrid zone" as defined

by Short (1969), and we follow Mayr and Short (MS) in treating them as conspecific. Both the "Myrtle Warbler" and the "Audubon's Warbler" occur in California.

Northern Oriole *(Icterus galbula)*. We have included the Baltimore Oriole *(I. galbula)* and the Bullock's Oriole *(I. bullockii)* of the A.O.U. in one species as recommended by Short (1969) and Sibley and Short (1964). The California population belongs to the *bullockii* group, but individuals of the nominate race *I. g. galbula* are recorded casually.

Great-tailed Grackle *(Cassidix mexicanus)*. Selander and Giller (1961) recommended that the Boat-tailed Grackle *(C. mexicanus)* of the A.O.U. be treated as two species: the Great-tailed Grackle *(C. mexicanus)* and the Boat-tailed Grackle *(C. major)*. Both species appear to coexist in Texas without interbreeding, even in mixed colonies.

Rosy Finch *(Leucosticte arctoa)*. The Gray-crowned Rosy Finch *(L. tephrocotis)*, Black Rosy Finch *(L. atrata)*, and Brown-capped Rosy Finch *(L. australis)* of the A.O.U. are treated as races of the Asiatic Rosy Finch *(L. arctoa)* by Vaurie (1959), and we have followed this arrangement since it is in agreement with the modern concepts for the treatment of allopatric and very similar populations. French (1959) found a contact area between the "Gray-crowned Rosy Finch" and the "Black Rosy Finch" that would apparently qualify as a "hybrid zone" as defined by Short (1969). The "Gray-crowned Rosy Finch" is resident in California, and there are a few records of the "Black Rosy Finch".

Dark-eyed Junco *(Junco hyemalis)*. We have included all the dark eyed juncos of North America in one species *J. hyemalis*, as suggested by Mayr (1942), Dickinson (1953), Phillips (1961), and Short (1969), since "hybrid zones" are clearly formed. Representatives of the "Slate-colored Junco", "Oregon Junco" and "Gray-headed Junco", as well as intermediate populations, occur in California.

GAVIIDAE

Common Loon *Gavia immer* N
Yellow-billed Loon *Gavia adamsii* X
Pacific Loon *Gavia pacifica*
Red-throated Loon *Gavia stellata*

PODICIPEDIDAE

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*
Horned Grebe *Podiceps auritus*
Eared Grebe *Podiceps caspicus* N
Least Grebe *Podiceps dominicus* X N
Western Grebe *Aechmophorus occidentalis* N
Pied-billed Grebe *Podilymbus podiceps* N

DIOMEDEIDAE

Wandering Albatross *Diomedea exulans* X
Short-tailed Albatross *Diomedea albatrus* X
Black-footed Albatross *Diomedea nigripes*
Laysan Albatross *Diomedea immutabilis* X

PROCELLARIIDAE

Cape Petrel *Daption capensis* X S
Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*
Pink-footed Shearwater *Puffinus creatopus*
Pale-footed Shearwater *Puffinus carneipes* X
New Zealand Shearwater *Puffinus bulleri*
Sooty Shearwater *Puffinus griseus*
Slender-billed Shearwater *Puffinus tenuirostris* X
Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*

HYDROBATIDAE

Fork-tailed Petrel *Oceanodroma furcata* N
Leach's Petrel *Oceanodroma leucorhoa* N
Ashy Petrel *Oceanodroma homochroa* N
Galapagos Petrel *Oceanodroma tethys* X
Black Petrel *Loomelania melania*
Least Petrel *Halocyptena microsoma* X
Wilson's Petrel *Oceanites oceanicus* X

PHAETHONTIDAE

Red-billed Tropicbird *Phaethon aethereus* X
White-tailed Tropicbird *Phaethon lepturus* X

PELECANIDAE

White Pelican *Pelecanus erythrorhynchos* N
Brown Pelican *Pelecanus occidentalis* N

SULIDAE

Blue-footed Booby *Sula nebouxii* X
Brown Booby *Sula leucogaster* X

PHALACROCORACIDAE

Double-crested Cormorant *Phalacrocorax auritus* N
Brandt's Cormorant *Phalacrocorax penicillatus* N
Pelagic Cormorant *Phalacrocorax pelagicus* N

FREGATIDAE

Magnificent Frigatebird *Fregata magnificens* X

ARDEIDAE

Great Blue Heron *Ardea herodias* N
Green Heron *Butorides virescens* N
Little Blue Heron *Florida caerulea* X
Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*
Reddish Egret *Dichromanassa rufescens* X
Common Egret *Casmerodius albus* N
Snowy Egret *Leucophoyx thula* N
Louisiana Heron *Hydranassa tricolor*
Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* N
Yellow-crowned Night Heron *Nyctanassa violacea* X
Least Bittern *Ixobrychus exilis* N
American Bittern *Botaurus lentiginosus* N
Wood Stork *Mycteria americana*

THRESKIORNITHIDAE

White-faced Ibis *Plegadis chihi* N
White Ibis *Eudocimus albus* X
Roseate Spoonbill *Ajaia ajaja* X

ANATIDAE

Whistling Swan *Olor columbianus*
Trumpeter Swan *Olor buccinator* X
Canada Goose *Branta canadensis* N
Brant *Branta bernicla* N
Emperor Goose *Philacte canagica* X
White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*
Snow Goose *Chen caerulescens* N
Ross' Goose *Chen rossii*
Black-bellied Tree Duck *Dendrocygna autumnalis* X
Fulvous Tree Duck *Dendrocygna bicolor* N
Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* N
Black Duck *Anas rubripes* X

Gadwall *Anas strepera* N
Pintail *Anas acuta* N
Green-winged Teal *Anas crecca* N
Blue-winged Teal *Anas discors* N
Cinnamon Teal *Anas cyanoptera* N
European Widgeon *Mareca penelope*
American Widgeon *Mareca americana* N
Shoveler *Spatula clypeata* N
Wood Duck *Aix sponsa* N
Redhead *Aythya americana* N
Ring-necked Duck *Aythya collaris* N
Canvasback *Aythya valisineria*
Greater Scaup *Aythya marila*
Lesser Scaup *Aythya affinis* N
Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula* X
Common Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*
Barrow's Goldeneye *Bucephala islandica* N
Bufflehead *Bucephala albeola* N
Oldsquaw *Clangula hyemalis*
Harlequin Duck *Histrionicus histrionicus* N
King Eider *Somateria spectabilis* X
White-winged Scoter *Melanitta fusca*
Surf Scoter *Melanitta perspicillata*
Common Scoter *Oidemia nigra*
Ruddy Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis* N
Hooded Merganser *Lophodytes cucullatus* N
Common Merganser *Mergus merganser* N
Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

CATHARTIDAE

Turkey Vulture *Cathartes aura* N
California Condor *Gymnogyps californianus* N

ACCIPITRIDAE

White-tailed Kite *Elanus leucurus* N
Mississippi Kite *Ictinia misisippiensis* X
Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis* N
Sharp-shinned Hawk *Accipiter striatus* N
Cooper's Hawk *Accipiter cooperii* N
Red-tailed Hawk *Buteo jamaicensis* N
Red-shouldered Hawk *Buteo lineatus* N
Broad-winged Hawk *Buteo platypterus* X

Swainson's Hawk *Buteo swainsoni* N
Zone-tailed Hawk *Buteo albonotatus* X
Rough-legged Hawk *Buteo lagopus*
Ferruginous Hawk *Buteo regalis*
Harris' Hawk *Parabuteo unicinctus* X N
Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos* N
Bald Eagle *Haliaeetus leucocephalus* N
Marsh Hawk *Circus cyaneus* N

PANDIONIDAE
Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* N

FALCONIDAE
Gyrfalcon *Falco rusticolus* X
Prairie Falcon *Falco mexicanus* N
Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* N
Pigeon Hawk *Falco columbarius*
Sparrow Hawk *Falco sparverius* N

TETRAONIDAE
Blue Grouse *Dendragapus obscurus* N
Ruffed Grouse *Bonasa umbellus* N
Sharp-tailed Grouse *Pedioecetes phasianellus* E
Sage Grouse *Centrocercus urophasianus* N

PHASIANIDAE
California Quail *Lophortyx californicus* N
Gambel's Quail *Lophortyx gambelii* N
Mountain Quail *Oreortyx pictus* N
Ring-necked Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus* I N
Chukar *Alectoris chukar* I N
Gray Partridge *Perdix perdix* I N

MELEAGRIDIDAE
Turkey *Meleagris gallopavo* I N

GRUIDAE
Sandhill Crane *Grus canadensis* N

RALLIDAE
Clapper Rail *Rallus longirostris* N
Virginia Rail *Rallus limicola* N
Sora *Porzana carolina* N
Yellow Rail *Coturnicops noveboracensis* X N
Black Rail *Laterallus jamaicensis* N
Purple Gallinule *Porphyrula martinica* X
Common Gallinule *Gallinula chloropus* N
American Coot *Fulica americana* N

HAEMATOPODIDAE

American Oystercatcher *Haematopus palliatus* X

Black Oystercatcher *Haematopus bachmani* N

CHARADRIIDAE

Semipalmated Plover *Charadrius semipalmatus*

Snowy Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus* N

Wilson's Plover *Charadrius wilsonia* X

Killdeer *Charadrius vociferus* N

Mountain Plover *Eupoda montana*

American Golden Plover *Pluvialis dominica*

Black-bellied Plover *Squatarola squatarola*

Surfbird *Aphriza virgata*

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

Black Turnstone *Arenaria melanocephala*

SCOLOPACIDAE

Common Snipe *Capella gallinago* N

European Jacksnipe *Lymnocryptes minimus* X

Long-billed Curlew *Numenius americanus* N

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Upland Sandpiper *Bartramia longicauda* X

Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularia* N

Solitary Sandpiper *Tringa solitaria*

Wandering Tattler *Heteroscelus incanum*

Willet *Catoptrophorus semipalmatus* N

Greater Yellowlegs *Totanus melanoleucus*

Lesser Yellowlegs *Totanus flavipes*

Knot *Calidris canutus*

Rock Sandpiper *Erolia ptilocnemis*

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper *Erolia acuminata* X

Pectoral Sandpiper *Erolia melanotos*

White-rumped Sandpiper *Erolia fuscicollis* X

Baird's Sandpiper *Erolia bairdii*

Least Sandpiper *Erolia minutilla*

Curlew Sandpiper *Erolia ferruginea* X

Dunlin *Erolia alpina*

Short-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus griseus*

Long-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus scolopaceus*

Stilt Sandpiper *Micropalama himantopus*

Semipalmated Sandpiper *Ereunetes pusillus* X

Western Sandpiper *Ereunetes mauri*

Buff-breasted Sandpiper *Tryngites subruficollis* X

Marbled Godwit *Limosa fedoa* N

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica* X

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax* X

Sanderling *Crocethia alba*

RECURVIROSTRIDAE

American Avocet *Recurvirostra americana* N

Black-necked Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* N

PHALAROPODIDAE

Red Phalarope *Phalaropus fulicarius*

Wilson's Phalarope *Steganopus tricolor* N

Northern Phalarope *Lobipes lobatus*

STERCORARIIDAE

Pomarine Jaeger *Stercorarius pomarinus*

Parasitic Jaeger *Stercorarius parasiticus*

Long-tailed Jaeger *Stercorarius longicaudus* X

Skua *Catharacta skua*

LARIDAE

Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus* X

Glaucous-winged Gull *Larus glaucescens*

Western Gull *Larus occidentalis*

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*

Thayer's Gull *Larus thayeri*

California Gull *Larus californicus* N

Ring-billed Gull *Larus delawarensis* N

Mew Gull *Larus canus*

Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus* X S

Laughing Gull *Larus atricilla* N

Franklin's Gull *Larus pipixcan* X

Bonaparte's Gull *Larus philadelphia*

Little Gull *Larus minutus* X

Heermann's Gull *Larus heermanni*

Black-legged Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

Sabine's Gull *Xema sabini*

Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica* N

Forster's Tern *Sterna forsteri* N

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*

Least Tern *Sterna albifrons* N

Royal Tern *Thalasseus maximus* N

Elegant Tern *Thalasseus elegans* N

Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia* N

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger* N

RYNCHOPIDAE
- Black Skimmer *Rynchops nigra* X

ALCIDAE
- Common Murre *Uria aalge* N
- Thick-billed Murre *Uria lomvia* X
- Pigeon Guillemot *Cepphus columba* N
- Marbled Murrelet *Brachyramphus marmoratus* N
- Xantus' Murrelet *Endomychura hypoleuca* N
- Craveri's Murrelet *Endomychura craveri* X
- Ancient Murrelet *Synthliboramphus antiquus*
- Cassin's Auklet *Ptychoramphus aleuticus* N
- Parakeet Auklet *Cyclorrhynchus psittacula* X
- Rhinoceros Auklet *Cerorhinca monocerata*
- Horned Puffin *Fratercula corniculata* X
- Tufted Puffin *Lunda cirrhata* N

COLUMBIDAE
- Band-tailed Pigeon *Columba fasciata* N
- Rock Dove *Columba livia* I N
- White-winged Dove *Zenaida asiatica* N
- Mourning Dove *Zenaidura macroura* N
- Spotted Dove *Streptopelia chinensis* I N
- Ringed Turtle Dove *Streptopelia risoria* I N
- Ground Dove *Columbigallina passerina* N
- Inca Dove *Scardafella inca* N

CUCULIDAE
- Yellow-billed Cuckoo *Coccyzus americanus* N
- Black-billed Cuckoo *Coccyzus erythropthalmus* X
- Roadrunner *Geococcyx californianus* N

TYTONIDAE
- Barn Owl *Tyto alba* N

STRIGIDAE
- Screech Owl *Otus asio* N
- Flammulated Owl *Otus flammeolus* N
- Great Horned Owl *Bubo virginianus* N
- Snowy Owl *Nyctea scandiaca* X
- Pygmy Owl *Glaucidium gnoma* N
- Elf Owl *Micrathene whitneyi* N
- Burrowing Owl *Speotyto cunicularia* N
- Spotted Owl *Strix occidentalis* N
- Great Gray Owl *Strix nebulosa* N
- Long-eared Owl *Asio otus* N
- Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus* N
- Saw-whet Owl *Aegolius acadicus* N

CAPRIMULGIDAE

Whip-poor-will *Caprimulgus vociferus* X

Poor-will *Phalaenoptilus nuttallii* N

Common Nighthawk *Chordeiles minor* N

Lesser Nighthawk *Chordeiles acutipennis* N

APODIDAE

Black Swift *Cypseloides niger* N

Chimney Swift *Chaetura pelagica* X

Vaux's Swift *Chaetura vauxi* N

White-throated Swift *Aeronautes saxatalis* N

TROCHILIDAE

Black-chinned Hummingbird *Archilochus alexandri* N

Costa's Hummingbird *Calypte costae* N

Anna's Hummingbird *Calypte anna* N

Broad-tailed Hummingbird *Selasphorus platycercus* N

Rufous Hummingbird *Selasphorus rufus* N

Allen's Hummingbird *Selasphorus sasin* N

Calliope Hummingbird *Stellula calliope* N

Broad-billed Hummingbird *Cynanthus latirostris* X S

ALCEDINIDAE

Belted Kingfisher *Megaceryle alcyon* N

PICIDAE

Common Flicker *Colaptes auratus* N

Pileated Woodpecker *Dryocopus pileatus* N

Gila Woodpecker *Centurus uropygialis* N

Acorn Woodpecker *Melanerpes formicivorus* N

Lewis' Woodpecker *Asyndesmus lewis* N

Red-naped Sapsucker *Sphyrapicus nuchalis* N

Red-breasted Sapsucker *Sphyrapicus ruber* N

Williamson's Sapsucker *Sphyrapicus thyroideus* N

Hairy Woodpecker *Dendrocopos villosus* N

Downy Woodpecker *Dendrocopos pubescens* N

Ladder-backed Woodpecker *Dendrocopos scalaris* N

Nuttall's Woodpecker *Dendrocopos nuttallii* N

White-headed Woodpecker *Dendrocopos albolarvatus* N

Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker *Picoides arcticus* N

TYRANNIDAE

Eastern Kingbird *Tyrannus tyrannus* X

Thick-billed Kingbird *Tyrannus crassirostris* X

Tropical Kingbird *Tyrannus melancholicus* X

Western Kingbird *Tyrannus verticalis* N

Cassin's Kingbird *Tyrannus vociferans* N
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher *Muscivora forficata* X
Great Crested Flycatcher *Myiarchus crinitus* X
Wied's Crested Flycatcher *Myiarchus tyrannulus* N
Ash-throated Flycatcher *Myiarchus cinerascens* N
Olivaceous Flycatcher *Myiarchus tuberculifer* X
Eastern Phoebe *Sayornis phoebe* X
Black Phoebe *Sayornis nigricans* N
Say's Phoebe *Sayornis saya* N
Willow Flycatcher *Empidonax traillii* N
Least Flycatcher *Empidonax minimus* X
Hammond's Flycatcher *Empidonax hammondii* N
Dusky Flycatcher *Empidonax oberholseri* N
Gray Flycatcher *Empidonax wrightii* N
Western Flycatcher *Empidonax difficilis* N
Coues' Flycatcher *Contopus pertinax* X
Western Wood Pewee *Contopus sordidulus* N
Olive-sided Flycatcher *Nuttallornis borealis* N
Vermilion Flycatcher *Pyrocephalus rubinus* N

ALAUDIDAE

Horned Lark *Eremophila alpestris* N

HIRUNDINIDAE

Violet-green Swallow *Tachycineta thalassina* N
Tree Swallow *Iridoprocne bicolor* N
Bank Swallow *Riparia riparia* N
Rough-winged Swallow *Stelgidopteryx ruficollis* N
Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* N
Cliff Swallow *Petrochelidon pyrrhonota* N
Purple Martin *Progne subis* N

CORVIDAE

Gray Jay *Perisoreus canadensis* N
Blue Jay *Cyanocitta cristata* X S
Steller's Jay *Cyanocitta stelleri* N
Scrub Jay *Aphelocoma coerulescens* N
Black-billed Magpie *Pica pica* N
Yellow-billed Magpie *Pica nuttalli* N
Common Raven *Corvus corax* N
Common Crow *Corvus brachyrhynchos* N
Piñon Jay *Gymnorhinus cyanocephala* N
Clark's Nutcracker *Nucifraga columbiana* N

PARIDAE

Black-capped Chickadee *Parus atricapillus* N
Mountain Chickadee *Parus gambeli* N
Chestnut-backed Chickadee *Parus rufescens* N
Plain Titmouse *Parus inornatus* N
Verdin *Auriparus flaviceps* N
Common Bushtit *Psaltriparus minimus* N

SITTIDAE

White-breasted Nuthatch *Sitta carolinensis* N
Red-breasted Nuthatch *Sitta canadensis* N
Pine Nuthatch *Sitta pusilla* N

CERTHIIDAE

Brown Creeper *Certhia familiaris* N

CHAMAEIDAE

Wrentit *Chamaea fasciata* N

CINCLIDAE

Dipper *Cinclus mexicanus* N

TROGLODYTIDAE

House Wren *Troglodytes aedon* N
Winter Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes* N
Bewick's Wren *Thryomanes bewickii* N
Cactus Wren *Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus* N
Long-billed Marsh Wren *Telmatodytes palustris* N
Cañon Wren *Catherpes mexicanus* N
Rock Wren *Salpinctes obsoletus* N

MIMIDAE

Mockingbird *Mimus polyglottos* N
Catbird *Dumetella carolinensis* X
Brown Thrasher *Toxostoma rufum* X
Bendire's Thrasher *Toxostoma bendirei* N
Curve-billed Thrasher *Toxostoma curvirostre* X
California Thrasher *Toxostoma redivivum* N
Le Conte's Thrasher *Toxostoma lecontei* N
Crissal Thrasher *Toxostoma dorsale* N
Sage Thrasher *Oreoscoptes montanus* N

TURDIDAE

Robin *Turdus migratorius* N
Varied Thrush *Ixoreus naevius* N
Wood Thrush *Hylocichla mustelina* X
Hermit Thrush *Hylocichla guttata* N

Swainson's Thrush *Hylocichla ustulata* N
Western Bluebird *Sialia mexicana* N
Mountain Bluebird *Sialia currucoides* N
Townsend's Solitaire *Myadestes townsendi* N

SYLVIIDAE

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher *Polioptila caerulea* N
Black-tailed Gnatcatcher *Polioptila melanura* N
Golden-crowned Kinglet *Regulus satrapa* N
Ruby-crowned Kinglet *Regulus calendula* N

MOTACILLIDAE

Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta*
Red-throated Pipit *Anthus cervinus* X

BOMBYCILLIDAE

Bohemian Waxwing *Bombycilla garrula* X
Cedar Waxwing *Bombycilla cedrorum* N

PTILOGONATIDAE

Phainopepla *Phainopepla nitens* N

LANIIDAE

Northern Shrike *Lanius excubitor*
Loggerhead Shrike *Lanius ludovicianus* N

STURNIDAE

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris* I N

VIREONIDAE

White-eyed Vireo *Vireo griseus* X
Hutton's Vireo *Vireo huttoni* N
Bell's Vireo *Vireo bellii* N
Gray Vireo *Vireo vicinior* N
Yellow-throated Vireo *Vireo flavifrons* X
Solitary Vireo *Vireo solitarius* N
Yellow-green Vireo *Vireo flavoviridis* X
Red-eyed Vireo *Vireo olivaceus* X
Philadelphia Vireo *Vireo philadelphicus* X
Warbling Vireo *Vireo gilvus* N

PARULIDAE

Black-and-white Warbler *Mniotilta varia* X
Prothonotary Warbler *Protonotaria citrea* X
Worm-eating Warbler *Helmitheros vermivorus* X
Golden-winged Warbler *Vermivora chrysoptera* X
Blue-winged Warbler *Vermivora pinus* X

Tennessee Warbler *Vermivora peregrina* X
Orange-crowned Warbler *Vermivora celata* N
Nashville Warbler *Vermivora ruficapilla* N
Virginia's Warbler *Vermivora virginiae* N
Lucy's Warbler *Vermivora luciae* N
Parula Warbler *Parula americana* X N
Yellow Warbler *Dendroica petechia* N
Magnolia Warbler *Dendroica magnolia* X
Cape May Warbler *Dendroica tigrina* X
Black-throated Blue Warbler *Dendroica caerulescens* X
Yellow-rumped Warbler *Dendroica coronata* N
Black-throated Gray Warbler *Dendroica nigrescens* N
Townsend's Warbler *Dendroica townsendi*
Black-throated Green Warbler *Dendroica virens* X
Hermit Warbler *Dendroica occidentalis* N
Cerulean Warbler *Dendroica cerulea* X
Blackburnian Warbler *Dendroica fusca* X
Yellow-throated Warbler *Dendroica dominica* X
Grace's Warbler *Dendroica graciae* X
Chestnut-sided Warbler *Dendroica pensylvanica* X
Bay-breasted Warbler *Dendroica castanea* X
Blackpoll Warbler *Dendroica striata* X
Pine Warbler *Dendroica pinus* X
Prairie Warbler *Dendroica discolor* X
Palm Warbler *Dendroica palmarum* X
Ovenbird *Seiurus aurocapillus* X
Northern Waterthrush *Seiurus noveboracensis* X
Louisiana Waterthrush *Seiurus motacilla* X
Kentucky Warbler *Oporornis formosus* X
Connecticut Warbler *Oporornis agilis* X
Mourning Warbler *Oporornis philadelphia* X
MacGillivray's Warbler *Oporornis tolmiei* N
Yellowthroat *Geothlypis trichas* N
Yellow-breasted Chat *Icteria virens* N
Hooded Warbler *Wilsonia citrina* X
Wilson's Warbler *Wilsonia pusilla* N
Canada Warbler *Wilsonia canadensis* X
American Redstart *Setophaga ruticilla*
Painted Redstart *Setophaga picta* X

PLOCEIDAE

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* I N

ICTERIDAE

Bobolink *Dolichonyx oryzivorus* X
Western Meadowlark *Sturnella neglecta* N
Yellow-headed Blackbird *Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus* N
Redwinged Blackbird *Agelaius phoeniceus* N
Tricolored Blackbird *Agelaius tricolor* N
Orchard Oriole *Icterus spurius* X
Hooded Oriole *Icterus cucullatus* N
Scarlet-headed Oriole *Icterus pustulatus* X
Scott's Oriole *Icterus parisorum* N
Northern Oriole *Icterus galbula* N
Rusty Blackbird *Euphagus carolinus* X
Brewer's Blackbird *Euphagus cyanocephalus* N
Great-tailed Grackle *Cassidix mexicanus* N
Brown-headed Cowbird *Molothrus ater* N
Bronzed Cowbird *Tangavius aeneus* N

THRAUPIDAE

Western Tanager *Piranga ludoviciana* N
Scarlet Tanager *Piranga olivacea* X
Hepatic Tanager *Piranga flava* X
Summer Tanager *Piranga rubra* N

FRINGILLIDAE

Cardinal *Richmondena cardinalis* N
Rose-breasted Grosbeak *Pheucticus ludovicianus* X
Black-headed Grosbeak *Pheucticus melanocephalus* N
Blue Grosbeak *Guiraca caerulea* N
Indigo Bunting *Passerina cyanea* X
Lazuli Bunting *Passerina amoena* N
Varied Bunting *Passerina versicolor* X
Painted Bunting *Passerina ciris* X
Dickcissel *Spiza americana* X
Evening Grosbeak *Hesperiphona vespertina* N
Purple Finch *Carpodacus purpureus* N
Cassin's Finch *Carpodacus cassinii* N
House Finch *Carpodacus mexicanus* N
Pine Grosbeak *Pinicola enucleator* N
Rosy Finch *Leucosticte arctoa* N
Common Redpoll *Acanthis flammea* X
Pine Siskin *Spinus pinus* N
American Goldfinch *Spinus tristis* N

Lesser Goldfinch *Spinus psaltria* N
Lawrence's Goldfinch *Spinus lawrencei* N
Red Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra* N
Green-tailed Towhee *Chlorura chlorura* N
Rufous-sided Towhee *Pipilo erythrophthalmus* N
Brown Towhee *Pipilo fuscus* N
Abert's Towhee *Pipilo aberti* N
Lark Bunting *Calamospiza melanocorys* X
Savannah Sparrow *Passerculus sandwichensis* N
Grasshopper Sparrow *Ammodramus savannarum* N
Baird's Sparrow *Ammodramus bairdii* X
Sharp-tailed Sparrow *Ammospiza caudacuta* X
Vesper Sparrow *Pooecetes gramineus* N
Lark Sparrow *Chondestes grammacus* N
Rufous-crowned Sparrow *Aimophila ruficeps* N
Cassin's Sparrow *Aimophila cassinii* X
Black-throated Sparrow *Amphispiza bilineata* N
Sage Sparrow *Amphispiza belli* N
Dark-eyed Junco *Junco hyemalis* N
Tree Sparrow *Spizella arborea* X
Chipping Sparrow *Spizella passerina* N
Clay-colored Sparrow *Spizella pallida* X
Brewer's Sparrow *Spizella breweri* N
Field Sparrow *Spizella pusilla* X
Black-chinned Sparrow *Spizella atrogularis* N
Harris' Sparrow *Zonotrichia querula* X
White-crowned Sparrow *Zonotrichia leucophrys* N
Golden-crowned Sparrow *Zonotrichia atricapilla*
White-throated Sparrow *Zonotrichia albicollis*
Fox Sparrow *Passerella iliaca* N
Lincoln's Sparrow *Melospiza lincolnii* N
Swamp Sparrow *Melospiza georgiana* X
Song Sparrow *Melospiza melodia* N
McCown's Longspur *Rhynchophanes mccownii* X
Lapland Longspur *Calcarius lapponicus*
Chestnut-collared Longspur *Calcarius ornatus* X
Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis* X

SPECIES DELETED FROM THE LIST

The hypothetical list of Grinnell and Miller (1944) includes a number of records of species which are clearly escapees, are of dubious origin, or are cases of misidentification. We do not differ from their point of view on these records and have not included them in this paper. Since 1944 records have been published in *The Condor* and *The Auk* which we feel should not be accepted for this list, and, in addition, we reject three species originally accepted by Grinnell and Miller and the A.O.U. These records are discussed, and our reasons for rejecting them are given.

Cape Petrel (*Daption capensis*). The record cited by Grinnell and Miller (1944) of a specimen "from the coast of California, opposite Monterey", taken sometime before 1853, has been discarded by Bourne (1967) as an unsatisfactory record.

Black-tailed Shearwater (*Adamastor cinereus*). The specimen from "off the coast of California, near Monterey," taken prior to 1853 and referred to by Grinnell and Miller (1944) has been considered by Bourne (1967) as inadequately substantiated.

Red-breasted Goose (*Branta ruficollis*). To date there are at least six records, involving seven individuals, from California. Anthony (1929) reported one acquired in a San Francisco game market which apparently was shot in the wheat fields north of San Francisco during the winter of 1892-93. Huey (1961) reported one shot near Carlsbad, San Diego County, on 18 September 1960. A specimen in the Los Angeles County Museum was shot near Lancaster, Los Angeles County, sometime in early November 1963. One deposited in the San Bernardino County Museum was shot near Redlands, San Bernardino County, on 20 November 1965. One was shot near Gray Lodge, Butte County, on 1 December 1968, and two were present at the Salton Sea, Imperial County, between 28 December 1968 and 11 January 1969, with one remaining until at least 16 February 1969 (Audubon Field Notes 23:515, 519). This species breeds in Western Siberia, at least 1800 miles west of the westernmost breeding populations of Snow Geese, and migrates southwestward to the Caspian Sea in the fall. There are many records of strays from Europe, but very few from Asiatic U.S.S.R. according to Dement'ev and Gladkov (1967), and none from Alaska or Canada. Therefore its occurrence as a genuine vagrant in California is most unlikely. Since Red-breasted Geese are commonly bred in captivity there is a strong possibility of escaped birds, and all California records are best treated as such.

Falcated Teal (*Anas falcata*). Hedgpeth (1954) reported one present in Golden Gate Park, San Francisco County, between 5 April and 21 May 1953, and expressed his opinion that the bird was an escapee. One was present on Newport Bay, Orange County, between 2 January and at least 21 February 1969 (Audubon Field Notes 23:519). Gabrielson and Lincoln (1959) show that this species has come no closer to the North American mainland than St. George Island, which is at the longitude of East Cape in Siberia. There is no indication that genuine strays have reached the North American mainland, and both of these records are best treated as escapees.

Baikal Teal (*Anas formosa*). Moffitt (1932) reported an adult male shot near Brentwood, Contra Costa County, on 15 December 1931, and Laughlin (1947) reported one shot near Calipatria, Imperial County, on 29 December 1946. When commenting on the Brentwood record, Swarth (1932) pointed out that this species was the second most common waterfowl handled by San Francisco dealers in wild birds, and that he had records of 527 entering San Francisco between 1 January 1928 and 30 June 1932. The 1931 and 1946 records are more likely to pertain to escapees than to genuine vagrants.

Spectacled Eider *(Lampronetta fischeri).* Grinnell and Miller (1944) refer to the head of an adult male preserved in the California Academy of Sciences. According to Moffitt (1940) it was donated by Mr. True, of the California State Division of Fish and Game, who received it from Game Warden Sellick, who had stated his father shot the bird on Bitterwater Lake, San Benito County, during February 1893. This is the only specimen of this species from any locality in North America outside of Alaska. Records of other eiders far south of their normal ranges usually pertain to immature birds. The likelihood of an adult male Spectacled Eider appearing on an inland lake in central California is very remote, and it is much more believable that the bird was shot in Alaska, and that the story concerning its origin became somewhat muddled in the 47 years the head was being passed around from father to son.

Black-tailed Gull (*Larus crassirostris*). Monroe (1955) reported collecting an adult female on San Diego Bay, San Diego County, on 28 November 1954. This is a common gull along the Pacific Coast of Asia between the Kurile Islands and the coast of southern China. Many U.S. Naval vessels operating out of San Diego spend some time within the normal range of this gull, and it is likely this individual was induced to stay aboard one of these vessels until it reached San Diego. The likelihood of this species ever reaching California as a

genuine stray is very remote.

Red-headed Woodpecker (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*). Marqua (1963) reported finding an adult bird, which had been dead for a considerable length of time, on the highway near La Puente, Los Angeles County, on 20 May 1962. There is a good possibility that this woodpecker had been killed outside the state and had been transported to the Los Angeles area in some manner, such as against the radiator of a car.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (*Sphyrapicus varius*). Davis and Howell (1951) reported the finding of a mummified bird in Pasadena, Los Angeles County, on 19 July 1950. There is no way of knowing whether this bird reached California as a genuine stray, or whether it was brought here as a mummified specimen and discarded. We should await a record of a living bird before placing the species on the list.

Kiskadee Flycatcher (*Pitangus sulphuratus*). Harvey (1958) reported one in San Jose, Santa Clara County, which was present from about 1 November 1957 until at least 6 June 1959 (McCaskie, pers. notes). A truly vagrant flycatcher is not likely to remain for such a long time in one locality, and this individual was almost certainly an escapee.

In addition, records of a few species covered by the A.O.U. and reported in Audubon Field Notes are omitted because they are based on sight records which lack sufficient details. They are listed without comment:

American Flamingo (*Phoenicopterus ruber*)
Mute Swan (*Cygnus olor*)
Ruddy Sheld-duck (*Casarca ferruginea*)
Black Vulture (*Coragyps atratus*)
Whiskered Owl (*Otus trichopsis*)
Veery (*Hylocichla fuscescens*)
Eastern Bluebird (*Sialia sialis*)
Sprague's Pipit (*Anthus spragueii*)
Crested Myna (*Acridotheres cristatellus*)
Pyrrhuloxia (*Pyrrhuloxia sinuata*)
European Goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*)
Rustic Bunting (*Emberiza rustica*)

We are also aware of records of a number of imported species, some of which are attempting to breed, and we feel these have no place on the list at this time.

SUMMARY

This checklist of the birds of California consists of: (1) A list of 501 species recorded in the state. Species which breed, those which are recorded only casually, and those which are introduced in the state are so designated. (2) A brief taxonomic discussion of species which are lumped or split, and other species which involve a change in nomenclature from that used in the A.O.U. Check-list of North American Birds (fifth edition). (3) A discussion of species which have been removed from the state list, giving reasons for their removal.

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Above, Arctic Tern *(Sterna paradisaea)*, June.
Below, Common Tern *(Sterna hirundo)*, June.

Note the different silhouettes, the Arctic Tern having the part of the body situated in front of the wings much shorter than the part situated behind the wings. The more rounded appearance of the head of the Arctic Tern is also visible in this photograph.

Above, Arctic Tern, June.
Below, Common Tern, June.
Note the long semi-transparent zone of the wings (all the primaries and secondaries) of the Arctic Tern; the Common Tern has only a small semi-transparent window in the inner primaries.

Above, Arctic Tern, June.
Below, Common Tern, June.
Note here the more slender silhouette of the Common Tern, and its long, black-tipped bill.

Photographic study of an Arctic Tern, showing the transparency of the wings.

IDENTIFICATION OF THE COMMON TERN AND THE ARCTIC TERN*

Jean-Pierre Vande Weghe

[The Common Tern *Sterna hirundo* and the Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea* present a very difficult problem of identification. Observers in California do not have at hand adequate information on the subject. We asked Mr. Vande Weghe for permission to publish in this journal a translation of the part of his paper "La Sterne pierregarin *Sterna hirundo* et la Sterne arctique *Sterna paradisaea*. Identification et Passage en Belgique" (Aves 3: 1-5, 1966) that pertains to field identification (the rest of the paper treats the status in Belgium).

Nine species of terns are regularly seen in California. They are conveniently classified in five groups. (1) The large terns – Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia*, Royal Tern *Thalasseus maximus*, and Elegant Tern *Thalasseus elegans* are easily separated from the others by their large size and their red or orange bill color; identification of the individual species presents no particularly difficult problem. (2) The fairly large, thick black-billed Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica* which is confined to the Salton Sea area. (3) The dark Black Tern *Chlidonias niger* which is always easily identified by its plumage color. (4) The very small Least Tern *Sterna albifrons* which is easily identified by its size. (5) The medium sized terns – Forster's Tern *Sterna forsteri*, Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*, and Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*. In this group Forster's Tern is reasonably easy to separate from the other two, though the identification is delicate and requires great care. Though it is quite beyond the scope of this article to discuss it in detail, we suggest the following guide lines:

(1) A bird showing dark shoulder patches is a young Common/Arctic Tern.

(2) A bird without shoulder patches, and showing no contrast between back and rump in flight (general whiteness) is an adult Forster's Tern.

(3) Both adult Common/Arctic and young Forster's lack shoulder patches and display a contrast between white rump and darker back; young Forster's are best distinguished by the brownish edgings on the back as well as the black tips to the outer three or four tail feathers.

* First published in the Belgian journal Aves.

(4) In every plumage except breeding adult, Forster's Tern has a diagnostic head pattern; a black ear patch, limited to the auriculars, and curving downwards toward the rear. The head patch of the Common Tern (when it has a white forehead) curves upwards to include the nape.

In California the Common Tern is a regular spring and fall migrant along the coast but appears to have a limited number of regular stopping points where it is common. It also occurs inland during the fall, especially at the Salton Sea. There are a few winter records for coastal Southern California. Records also span the entire summer season, but there is no evidence of breeding.

During the spring the Common Tern appears to be confined to the coast and offshore waters. Spring migrants first appear in coastal Southern California during the last week of April and are most numerous during the first two weeks of May. Small numbers are still found until the end of May, and stragglers have been recorded during June.

Fall migrants appear early, and the first are usually in California by the first week of July. Numbers reach a peak during September and early October, and fair numbers persist in coastal Southern California until early November. A few regularly stay in coastal Southern California until late December, and individuals have remained through the winter on San Diego Bay. During the fall Common Terns occur inland in limited numbers as well as being fairly numerous along the coast, and they have been recorded from such localities as Lake Almanor, Lake Tahoe (regular), Mendota, Victorville, the Salton Sea (regular flocks of up to 100), and along the Colorado River from Needles to Yuma.

Along the coast the Common Tern appears to prefer the larger bays, and it also appears to be more numerous in Southern California.

The Arctic Tern is an offshore migrant during the fall; it is highly pelagic, seldom, if ever, occurring near the shore. There are unverified reports of small flocks during May far off the coast of Southern California, and there is one specimen, from Laguna Beach, which cannot be found. During the fall it is fairly numerous off the coast from August until October, with records from July 27 to October 14.

We are grateful to Mr. Vande Weghe for permission to translate his paper and MM. van Groenendael and Dobrski for allowing us to reproduce the photographs which illustrated Mr. Vande Weghe's paper. We also wish to thank the editors of Aves for their cooperation. – Eds.]

IDENTIFICATION OF COMMON AND ARCTIC TERNS

Four species of Terns can be observed annually in Belgium. The Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis* and the Least Tern *Sterna albifrons* do not present any difficulty of identification, and with some practice they can be easily recognized even at a great distance.

A very different situation prevails, unfortunately, for our two red-billed species: the Common Tern *Sterna hirundo* and the Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*. Even the experienced observer with a wide knowledge of seabirds is often unable to make an exact identification. The reason for this is that very few ornithologists know the true diagnostic characters and can evaluate them correctly in the field. Moreover, these birds are often seen at a great distance, briefly, or in poor light.

The detailed descriptions found in standard guides and handbooks are generally of very little value for the field observer. At most, one finds the characters that separate the two species on the ground.

Thus we learn that the bill of the Arctic Tern is shorter and all red, that its tail is longer, and that its legs are shorter. It is, however, very difficult to judge the length of the legs on an isolated bird in the field since it depends largely on the way in which the bird has arranged its breast and belly feathers. Moreover, I have never seen an Arctic Tern on the ground in Belgium.

Therefore it is mostly in flight that the two species must be separated. In this case three groups of characters can be used. First, it appears that the silhouette of the Arctic Tern is slightly, though clearly, different from that of the Common Tern. The Arctic Tern has the bill and the head, thus the whole part of the body situated in front of the wings, much shorter than the part situated behind the wings, which includes the rump and tail; the ratio is 1 to 2.5 or 3 in the Arctic Tern compared to 1 to 1.5 or 2 in the Common Tern (see photographs 1 and 2). In addition, if the bird is close enough, one can see that the bill itself is much shorter, which gives the head a more rounded appearance (see photographs 1, 3, and 5).

The second important character is the transparency of the wings. This comes from the fact that the secondaries (especially the external secondaries) and the primaries are much whiter and less powdered with light gray in the Arctic Tern than in the Common Tern. Thus, there is a wide transparent triangle visible on the underwings when the observer is looking up at the bird, and a long whitish triangle contrasting with the gray coverts visible on the upper-wings (see photographs 3 and 4). The rectrices, especially the external rectrices, are also

much whiter in the Arctic Tern, hence its general appearance is much whiter than that of the Common Tern (see photographs 3 and 4). With wear and molt this difference is most marked during the fall.

The third character is the voice. As far as I am concerned this in itself can be diagnostic. The Arctic Tern has a complete series of calls different from those of the Common Tern, but most are heard only on the breeding grounds and are therefore of little value to an observer in Belgium. One, however, is important and is heard regularly during migration; this a fine "keeh. . . keeh. . . keeh. . .", soft, short, clear, and often repeated a few times. The corresponding call of the Common Tern is a longer, lower-pitched, more nasal "krre" which includes rather different tones. To know these calls it is necessary to hear them a few times, but once learned they are not easily forgotten.

Many observers try to identify the Arctic Tern by the all red bill. This character has value only in the spring and on the breeding grounds. Indeed, in the summer and fall, beginning as early as July, the bills of both species become increasingly black. It is only in the spring, and then only when the bird can be seen at very close range in excellent light, that the absense of a black tip to the bill can be a help in confirming identification. This point, however, is never conclusive by itself since some Common Terns lack the black bill tip.

In general, the characters that I have described are not very clear-cut, and one will not identify a passing Arctic Tern in a flock of Common Terns on the first try. On the contrary, only after seeing several birds, and after learning how to evaluate the various characters according to the distance, the light, the sky, the color and state of the ocean, the manner of flight of the birds, and the angle of observation, will one succeed in making a positive identification. It must be admitted that, even for the best observer, some birds must go unidentified. In these cases it is best to put the bird down as "*Sterna species*" or to use the British term "Commic Tern" derived from the words Common and Arctic.

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NOTES

KENTUCKY WARBLER IN SAN DIEGO

At 08:00, 4 June 1968 I mist netted a Kentucky Warbler *(Oporornis formosus)* in my yard on Point Loma, San Diego County, California. The bird was seen in the hand by others including V. P. Coughran, A. M. Craig, C. R. Lyons and R. G. McCaskie. It was then banded, photographed (color photos deposited in the San Diego Natural History Museum), and released. At 15:00 this bird was netted again by V. P. Coughran ¼ mile to the west of our nets. Pierre Devillers saw the bird before it was released again and wrote a complete description of it. The following is taken from his notes:

> A large, heavy-bodied warbler. Upperparts: forehead and anterior crown black, rest of crown, nape, back, and rump bright olive-green, with a region of black feathers edged with green between the black and green on the crown. Long, yellow supercilium, a short yellow line branching downward behind the eye and passing under the eye (where it is very fine). Lores and auriculars vivid black, the black band on the auriculars widening and curving downward, framing the throat, and continuing as a fine short line pointing toward the breast. Underparts: chin, throat, breast, belly, undertail coverts bright yellow, undertail coverts long and pointed, flanks olive. Wing: wing coverts like the back, remiges dark brown, edged with green. Tail: rounded, rectrices like the remiges. Soft parts: eye black, bill long, slender and pointed. Maxilla dark brownish black, mandible of the same color except the very base which is pale horn color. Legs pale pinkish horn, long and rather sturdy.

Kentucky Warbler *(Oporornis formosus)* photographed on Point Loma, San Diego, California.

This is the first record of Kentucky Warbler in California. The breeding range of this species is confined to the deciduous woodlands of the eastern United States, the western limit extending roughly along the eastern edges of Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas. The western limit of this species' range corresponds with the western edge of the temperate deciduous forest (Griscom and Sprunt, 1957, Shelford, 1963). Kentucky Warblers winter from southern Veracruz south through Central America and Panama to Colombia and Venezuela (A.O.U. 1957).

Extralimital records of Kentucky Warbler in the west include a male collected in southeastern Sonora in the Sierra Saguaribo, Mexico, 12 June 1937 (van Rossem, 1945), one collected in Ramsey Canyon, Arizona, 23 May 1959 (Monson and Phillips, 1964), and one seen on the Farallon Islands, San Francisco County, California, 2 June 1969 by Henry C. Robert and John Smail (Smail, 1969). All, including the San Diego bird, are late spring records.

Miller *et al* (1957) do not record this species in the Pacific Lowlands west of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec; however, the following sight records from San Blas, Nayarit indicate it has occurred in this region: March 1964 (Alden, 1969), 27 March 1965 (Coskren, 1965), one seen on 18 March 1969, and another on 19 March 1969 (Pierre Devillers and A. M. Craig, pers. comm.). Some Kentucky Warblers may winter regularly in small numbers there, or perhaps stray there in the late winter.

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A CAPE PETREL OFF MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA.

On an organized boat trip to look for pelagic birds off Monterey, Monterey County, California, on 9 September 1962 I saw a strange sea bird that I later identified as a Cape Petrel *(Daption capensis)*. This bird was seen by some of the other people on the boat including Robert O. Paxton and Richard Stallcup, who also agreed upon the subsequent identification. The following description is taken from my notes:

> Upperparts: entire head including the nape, sides of the head and throat, dark blackish-brown; back and scapulars sooty-brown boldly speckled with white; color of the rump and tail not noted. Wings: upper side of the primaries, secondaries and upper wing coverts dark sooty-brown except for a bold white patch near the base of the primaries, and another bold white patch near the body just out from the scapulars; under sides of the wings immaculate white. Underparts: chin and throat dark blackish-brown ending in an abrupt line across the upper breast; breast, flanks, belly and under tail coverts immaculate white. Soft parts: color of bill and legs not noted. Size: bird appeared to be about the size of a Sooty Shearwater *(Puffinus griseus)*, but body appeared shorter and stockier; wings about the same length as those of the Sooty Shearwater; wing-beat similar to that of the Sooty Shearwater.

Three sketches of the bird (Fig. 1) were made shortly after I disembarked from the boat, about three hours after seeing the bird.

When first seen the Cape Petrel was flying alongside the boat at a distance of about 40 feet with a small flock of Sooty Shearwaters that had just flushed from the water. It rapidly passed ahead of the boat and after about eight seconds was lost from sight in a fog that was rising off the water like steam. The ocean was glassy calm all day, and there was only a slight breeze blowing.

When I first saw the bird its underparts were towards me. My first reaction was that it was a New Zealand Shearwater *(Puffinus bulleri)* because of its immaculate white under parts; however, the bird had a dark head, and when it tilted over I saw the checkered black and white back and the two bold white patches on each wing and realized that it was a bird I had never seen before. While viewing the bird through my 10 power binoculars I was trying to call other people's attention to it and to make mental notes of its characters. In doing this I failed to note anything striking about the rump and tail, and also did not notice what color the legs, feet, and bill were.

One of my earlier thoughts was that the bird might be a partial albino Sooty Shearwater; however, it bore a striking resemblance to a Cape Petrel; the pattern was symetrical and very uniform, and the flight feathers were white below and dark above. All these factors indicate the bird was a genuine Cape Petrel that had crossed the equator into the North Pacific, and not a mutant Sooty Shearwater.

On 10 September I checked study skins in the San Diego Natural History Museum and felt that the skins of the Cape Petrel matched the bird I had seen the previous day. It was easy for me to see why I had not noted the tail and rump pattern for it did not contrast sharply with the checkered back. The rump is checkered black and white like the back, and the tail is white with a broad black terminal band. On 25 September I talked to Ken Stott of San Diego, who had just returned from the southern oceans where he saw many Cape Petrels. He

stated that the Cape Petrel flies like any medium-sized shearwater, and would look very similar to a Sooty Shearwater in flight.

W. R. P. Bourne (Ibis 109: 150, 1967) pointed out that there were no satisfactory records of a Cape Petrel from anywhere north of the equator, but thought it likely that one would be found there sooner or later. The original field notes and sketches of the Monterey Bay bird were sent to Bourne for his comments, and he replied that he would accept the bird as a Cape Petrel. I thank W. R. P. Bourne for his time and comments. *Guy McCaskie, San Diego Natural History Museum, Balboa Park, San Diego, California.*

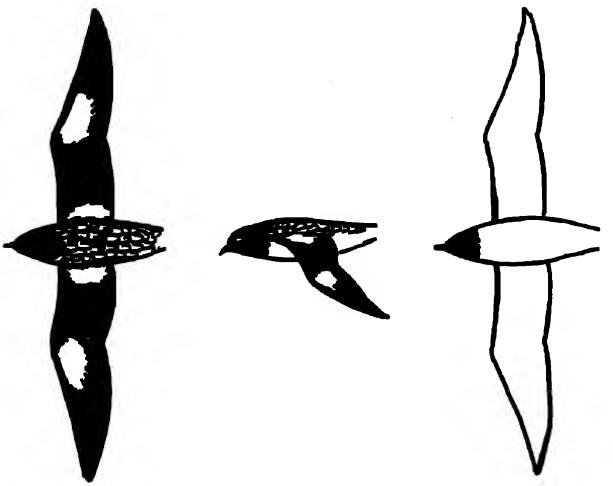

FIGURE 1. Three sketches of a Cape Petrel seen off Monterey, Monterey County, California, on 9 September 1962. The sketches show the bird as it appeared from above, from the side, and from below.